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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001262

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, S/CT
NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [CE](#) [NO](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: Tigers still refusing request from monitors to vacate forward base; Another military informant killed

Refs: (A) FBIS Reston Va DTG 170326Z Jul 03

- (B) FBIS Reston Va DTG 150248Z Jul 03
- (C) Colombo 1256, and previous

(U) Classified by James F. Entwistle, Charge d'Affaires.
Reasons 1.5 (b, d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) has not yet been able to convince the Tamil Tigers to vacate a base the group has established in the east. The Tigers say the base is within their zone and not in a GSL-demarcated area. In other peace process developments, another military informant was killed late July 17. The Tigers are almost certainly to blame. The controversy over the base is causing strains in the SLMM's relationship with the Tigers. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) CONTROVERSY OVER TIGER BASE: The Norwegian-run SLMM is becoming increasingly concerned over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) organization's refusal to vacate a forward base the group has established in the east. The base, which is variously referred to as the "Wan Ela" or "Manrasakulam" camp, is near Kinniya, a town located roughly 15 kilometers to the southwest of Trincomalee city. It is not clear when the LTTE established the base, but the group apparently did so in the past year. The LTTE has reportedly taken steps to enlarge the base in recent weeks. The base is believed to contain several bunkers which are possibly filled with arms and ammunition.

3. (C) Reacting to complaints from the GSL and local Muslims, the SLMM began to investigate the LTTE's establishment of the base several weeks ago. (Note: Kinniya has a large population of Muslims. Muslims, in general, are very worried about any indications of increased Tiger influence in the east -- see Ref C.) According to Hagrup Haukland, the Deputy Chief of the SLMM, the basic rule the monitors are using in examining the dispute comes from the February 2002 ceasefire agreement. Haukland said the agreement makes clear that the military forces of the LTTE and the government cannot expand their zones of control during the ceasefire. After examining records and completing a site survey of the base on July 16, the SLMM ruled that the Tigers' base was built after the ceasefire agreement came into force and that it encroaches on government-controlled territory.

4. (C) For their part, the Tigers have vociferously denied that the base is in a government-controlled area. In recent meetings with SLMM officials, including Chief Tryggve Tellefsen, the LTTE's political chief S.P. Thamichelvam has underscored that the Tigers have no plans to vacate the area. Exasperated by the Tigers' hard-line stance, Haukland has given several interviews to the press in which he has lashed out at the LTTE, asserting that the group must vacate the site as soon as possible (see Refs A-B). Among other concerns, Haukland has also complained that the LTTE is not allowing the monitors access to sites in all the areas it controls. In recent conversations with polchief Haukland asserted that the monitors' relationship with the Tigers is not approaching the breakdown stage despite his harsh comments. When asked about next steps, Haukland said the SLMM would continue to try to convince the Tigers to withdraw from the area through private and public communications. (Note: The SLMM's Tellefsen briefed Prime Minister Wickremesinghe about the dispute in a July 17 meeting.)

5. (C) ANOTHER INFORMANT SLAIN: In other peace process developments, another military informant was killed late July 17. The informant, a Muslim named Abdul Baheer Fowzie, 38, was gunned down by two men at a site north of Trincomalee city. The slaying of Fowzie appears to be part of the spate of killings of military informants and Tamil Tiger opponents that has gained pace in recent months (see Ref C). The Tigers have not taken responsibility for any of the killings, including that of Fowzie. Given the seemingly organized nature of the

killings and the victims' occupations and/or political leanings, there is little doubt that the Tigers are responsible, however.

16. (C) COMMENT: The controversy over the base near Kinniya is sparking strains in the SLMM's relationship with the Tigers. In their public comments, there is little doubt that the monitors are getting increasingly exasperated with the Tigers. The SLMM essentially feels that the LTTE is not living up to its part of the ceasefire agreement bargain by acceding to the monitors' rulings. The SLMM has made the Tiger leadership aware of its concerns, and it is now up to Tamilchelvam and others to react in a constructive manner. If the Tigers do not play ball, the SLMM's mandate will become increasingly difficult to fulfill. END COMMENT.

ENTWISTLE